

Public Testimony before the Joint Appropriations Committee Regarding Line-Item
State Appropriation for the National Theatre of the Deaf

March 2, 2015

Sen. Bye and Rep. Walker, Co-Chairs & Members of the Appropriations
Committee:

I am Laurence Moskowitz, Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) and resident of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to speak you about Connecticut's National Theatre of the Deaf.

Not only have I been an audience member, donor, board member and now Vice Chairman of the NTD over the course of nearly 30 years, but I also married a woman whose life was forever changed by her seven years with the company.

While I have simply marveled at the excellence, uniqueness and vitality of the NTD's iconic art form, I am in awe of the opportunities it has given aspiring actors, directors, writers, designers, theatrical managers who have been touched by this one-of-a-kind institution.

My wife, Carole Addabbo Moskowitz, now a professor of American Sign Language at a major university, was a struggling young deaf artist when she accepted an opportunity to join the NTD summer training program in 1977. She had no college degree, no true career path and no full-time job.

After her summer "school" with NTD, she had found her way, joined the company that Fall and went on to perform dozens of plays across 48 states and several continents for seven years. The NTD experience changed her life, giving her skills, artistic vision, discipline, a newfound appreciation of art and a remarkable vista on the world.

I met my wife in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1985, as she was recruited to join an amateur acting group on a break from an NTD tour. Being "hearing" and never having signed before, I was simply astounded at the beauty of American Sign Language as expressed by her hands.

We were quickly engaged and I'm afraid I took her away from the NTD so we could marry, live together and start a family. The discipline she learned helped guide her through completing her undergraduate degree, going on to earn her master's and start a new career as a college professor.

In return, I joined the NTD board, on which I have served for two terms during which I have endeavored to help the NTD not only survive, but to regain its international stature as a global ambassador not only for deaf actors, writers and directors, but for Connecticut and the United States.

Any reduction in funding in the state budget, let alone elimination, would be catastrophic for the NTD and would likely spell the immediate end of opportunity for young deaf and hearing theatrical performers and artists. That would be too big a blow to them, to the state and to the nation. Please ensure that the great tradition of the NTD lives on.

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